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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

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EYES ONLY

TO: President Gerald R. Ford  
FROM: Benton L. Becker *BLB*  
DATE: June 4, 1976  
SUBJECT: Personal Observations from an Old Friend

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During the past month, I have witnessed certain acts or omissions within the Administration and/or PFC which have both perplexed and troubled me. My deep personal feeling for you and belief in you has caused me to conclude that my continued silence on these matters would be a disservice to you. I know that these observations will be received by you as being motivated by no other interest than my personal feelings for you.

Item 1:

As early as February, 1976, NBC submitted a request to the White House for the President to address a formal dinner function in New York on June 22, commemorating 50 years of network television. The invitation, personally delivered by our mutual friend Bob Hynes, afforded an opportunity for a Bob Hope introduction to a Presidential address, on any subject selected by the President, to be carried the following morning on NBC's Today Show and the following evening on NBC's network news. ABC and CBS camera crews would cover the event. NBC earmarked the event as a "news event" not requiring equal time to other primary opponents. Bob Hynes and I conservatively estimated the value of the free network exposure to be \$200,000.

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As late as May 28, 1976, the White House had not responded to NBC. Following my prodding of the White House staff, NBC was notified in the first week in June, less than three weeks before the scheduled event and after sitting on the request for five months, that the President would not attend. I found that decision particularly perplexing in view of the Republican National Committee's (RNC) commitment to spend in excess of \$1 million for paid political-Republican-Ford Administration televised advertisements following the California primary through Convention Eve. The RNC intends to employ these ads to avoid a Democratic-Carter blitz of the airways during that time period.

Following the White House decision and its communication of same to NBC, I sought with the ever present assistance of Bob Hynes, to soothe the network, suggesting exploration of a possible telephone hookup for a Presidential statement at the dinner or a Presidential telegram to the Chairman of the NBC Board to be read at the dinner. Despite Mr. Hynes' efforts, both were rejected summarily.

Item 2:

The RNC has had more than its share of problems with the Commissioners of the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The RNC sought and recommended to the White House the appointment of Jim Schaner for the Commissionership vacated by Tom Curtis. The RNC was informed, that in the judgment of the White House, Mr. Schaner could not be confirmed. It was the RNC's intent to have a Republican advocate on the Commission to balance the overwhelming power now exercised by Commissioner Tom Harris. Instead the White House appointed William Springer, informing the RNC of that decision after the appointment had been made. Mr. Springer's confirmation, of course, occurred expeditiously in light of the withholding of Presidential campaign funds. The first act of the newly constituted Commission was to submit proposed regulations unconstitutionally diluting the Congressional intent and Supreme Court dictate in Buckley v. Valeo on independent expenditures.

Item 3:

Mr. Al Arnett, President Nixon's OEO Director before Howard Phillips, expressed a strong interest in campaigning for the President in California. California houses 40 Community Action offices employing over 30,000 individuals, whom Mr. Arnett

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justifiably believes are personally indebted to him. He had made telephone contact with many of the agencies on your behalf and proposed a three-day trip for himself to California to encourage PFC support for the Ford campaign in California among these individuals. All parties contacted were receptive and anxious to campaign against Governor Reagan. Roy Hughes at PFC followed through with Arnett fully, but no invitation or coordination was ever communicated to Arnett from the California PFC office. Similarly, I have contacted and communicated with one Frank Dominguez in Los Angeles regarding his availability to marshal the California Latin community on your behalf. Mr. Dominguez is a wealthy, respected, and civically active Latin in California. He advises that no justifiable reason exists for any Republican California citizens of Latin extraction to vote for Governor Reagan, suggesting the availability of 200,000 to 300,000 votes for the President if an effort were made to court that constituency. He would undertake that role with the California PFC but, again, although his availability has been communicated by me, no contact has been made.

Item 4:

I am informed that the State Department is considering recommending to the White House the appointment of Turner Shelton as the Consul-General of Casablanca, Morocco. Mr. Shelton has received much notoriety from the press regarding his tenure under President Nixon as Consul-General to the Bahamas and Ambassador to Nicaragua. He is, in my judgment, a tarnished figure, an opportunist and not a proper representative of the United States. In addition to the public allegations surrounding Mr. Shelton, an air of mystery surrounds his tenure as Ambassador involving Howard Hughes and the former President.

I see this memorandum is becoming rather lengthy, so I will conclude here. Joanne and I regularly say a little prayer for you and your family each night. We shall continue to do so.

*TREW*  
KATHIE

The attached letter from Benton Becker to the President has been  
seen by the President. It should go into Presidential papers.....  
there's no need for a response.

RBC  
7/11/76